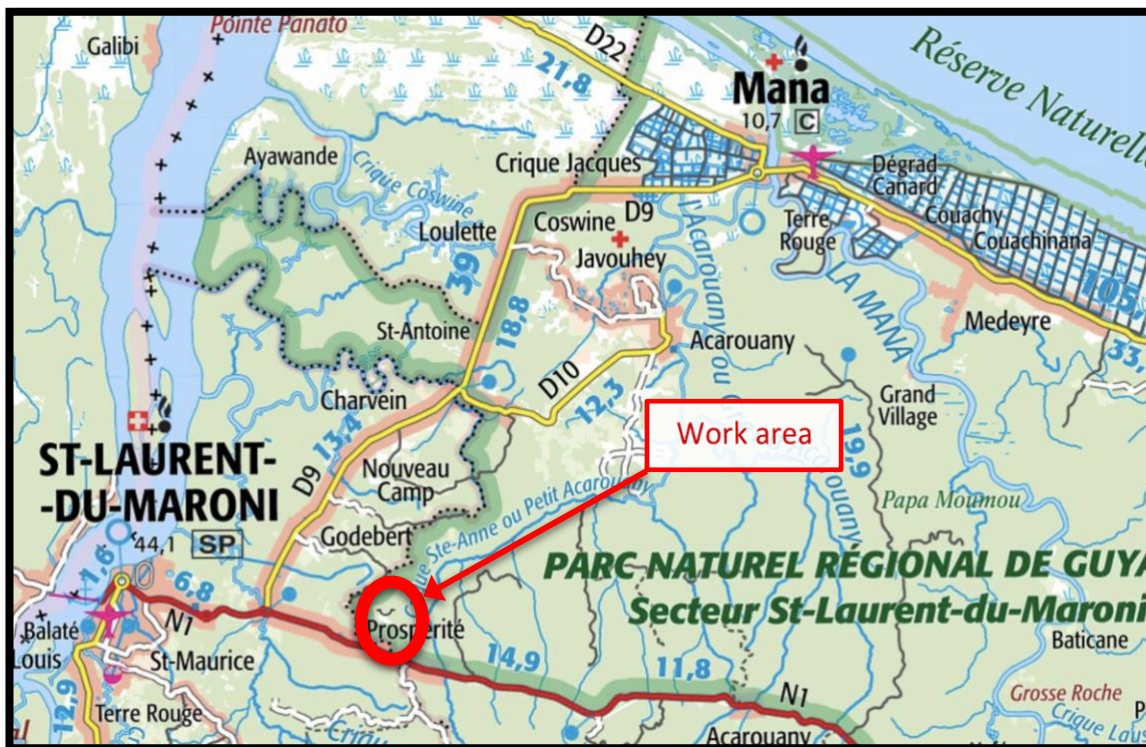




The toxic impacts of some climate change solutions

Submission for Special Rapporteur's thematic report on detoxification/decarbonization

In French Guiana, on the ancestral lands of the Kali'na people, the Meridiam investment fund has started to raze a 78-hectare plot of Amazon forest to install... solar panels. The Kali'na people of the Prosperity village, who saw their land stolen by European settlers several centuries ago, therefore see today an industrial project settling on their living territory.



The Centrale Electrique de l'Ouest Guyanais (CEOG) project, which combines photovoltaic solar power and a storage unit in the form of hydrogen, is presented as being exemplary from a social and environmental point of view.

However, this project and its location derogate from our right to dispose of our land: while we have been waiting for 30 years for the State to entrust this land to us under the "collective use right zones", the company HDF Energy has obtained in less than a year the authorization to set up the power plant there without real consultation with the inhabitants. This project also derogates from our right to prior, free and informed consent, also protected by the French constitutional right to public information and participation.





Untranslated documents, strong and repeated pressure exerted on the village chief to accept the project in return for financial compensation, so many proven methods that are part of the long colonial history of French Guiana since the 17th century: land spoliation, extermination of Amerindians, deportation of slaves, colonial plantations, penal colonies mining extraction, industrial settlements in the Amazon. The denial of indigenous peoples remains, even today, one of the most symptomatic expressions. The State and the industrialist are indeed showing a deaf and now brutal obstinacy in the face of the long-standing requests for the displacement of the CEOG industrial project, as evidenced by the violent arrest of the village chief as well as several inhabitants following a day of pacifist mobilization to contest the continuation of the construction site. They were handcuffed and taken into custody like terrorists while they were just defending their rights and their forest.



From an environmental point of view, the plant's footprint is within a natural area of ecological, faunal and floristic interest (ZNIEFF), within the Regional Natural Park of French Guiana. The diagnosis aimed at detailing the biodiversity present on the ground carried out by the Biotope design office for the company, has serious shortcomings in the opinion of the naturalists who carried it out over too short a time and in weather conditions

unfavorable. Despite this incomplete study, 33 protected species are clearly identified there and are directly threatened by the implementation of the power plant project. 10 more protected species were

observed on the site in just 3 days by a professional ornithologist appointed by the village association.





Moreover, in just a few days of work, all the waterways in the sector were polluted by non-compliance with the environmental authorization order. And a protected and



very rare mammal, the Aquatic Opossum (*Chironectes minimus*) sees its habitat degraded and altered day after day, which is likely to make it disappear. However, the company does not have the necessary exemptions to continue its



project legally. A criminal complaint was, moreover, filed with the public prosecutor of Cayenne on November 25, 2022 by the association of the Amerindian village and the National Association for Biodiversity for 4 environmental offenses.

The harmful impacts of this industrial project in the middle of the Amazon rainforest are unfortunately not only felt on the

local fauna but also on the flora. Indeed, not only are several tree species present in the area sacred to the indigenous people, but some are also on the red list and classified as "vulnerable" or in "danger of extinction" or even in "critical danger of extinction". by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). All this did not prevent the company from deforesting 16.5ha of this forest

However, there is no shortage of already artificialized surfaces in french Guiana, other spaces could have been found outside any Natural Park and any Znieff. The ecologists paid by the companies had in this respect insisted

in their report on one point: **"All the forest habitats present a very strong sensitivity vis-à-vis the project given that a forest is obviously incompatible with the setting up a photovoltaic project"**.



Not only has this devastating industrial project been imposed on the indigenous Kali'na people within their own forest, but it is severely impacting the area and surrounding areas by polluting waterways and compromising the reproduction and lives of dozens of protected species with sometimes maximum conservation stakes.

This industrial 2.0 colonization is particularly harmful. But we keep in mind that an investment fund, before making electricity, seeks to make a profit. At the risk that what governments call “energy transition” becomes nothing more than a new enslavement of peoples and natural environments.

We, the Kali'na people and the indigenous peoples of french Guiana, therefore challenge the representatives of the French State through this



information addressed to the UN special rapporteur, as to their responsibilities in putting an end to the humiliations towards the Kali'na

people and to reaffirm France's commitment to respecting the rights of the first nations.

We would like to recall that despite France's failure to ratify Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) of 1989 relating to indigenous and tribal peoples, the State has undertaken to respect and apply its principles in accordance with our Constitution.

We ask to immediately suspend the work of the CEOG in french Guiana and to guarantee locally the resumption of discussions on the

Toxic impacts of an industrial solar project on an indigenous people and nature



displacement of this project. It is not possible to impose "major projects", even in the name of the energy transition, without the environmental code being respected and without the enlightened will of the inhabitants, especially in territory marked permanently by colonization.











French National assembly (December 6th 2022)



French Senate (December 6th 2022)



Toxic impacts of an industrial solar project on an indigenous people and nature



Communication to the Special Rapporteur submitted by :

- Association “Village Prospérité” (Prosperity Village Association)
- Association Nationale pour la Biodiversité (National Association for Biodiversity)
- Groupe National de Surveillance des Arbres (National Tree Watch Groupe)
- Fondation Danielle Mitterrand (Danielle Mitterrand Foundation)
- Comité de solidarité avec les Indiens des Amériques (Committee in Solidary with the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas (CSIA-Nitassinan))
- Jeunesse Autochtone de Guyane (Indigenous Youth of French Guiana)
- Nature Rights
- Maïouri Nature Guyane
- Wild Legal
- Association pour la Protection des Animaux Sauvages (Association for the Protection of Wild Animals)
- Ligue des Droits de l’Homme, Section Guyane (Human rights league, French Guiana branch)

